

Town of Strathmere
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail
County Road 619, South of Corson's Inlet
Strathmere
Cape May County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1043

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5-STRAT,
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

TOWN OF STRATHMERE

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- Location:** New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail, County Road 619, South of Corson's Inlet, Strathmere, Cape May Barrier Island, Cape May County, New Jersey.
- Significance:** Strathmere is representative of the resorts which developed along the Cape May Barrier islands as a result of the arrival of the West Jersey and Seashore railroad. The West Jersey Railroad's decision to connect Sea Isle City and Ocean City in 1884 resulted in the development of the northern section of the island.
- History:** Though the city of Strathmere was not officially named until 1912, its resort history dates back to the 1870s. The Whelen hotel, built in 1871, housed Pennsylvania railroad workers and adventurous fishermen.¹ First known as Corson's Inlet, after early settlers John and Peter Corson, the area was called Whale Beach when the first boardwalk was constructed in 1911.

Strathmere did not experience the same development pressure confronting many other shore resorts. The only known industry in town was a boatyard established in the 1930s by Alfred May.² Today, a post office, volunteer fire company, hotel and restaurant form the Landis Avenue commercial district. Just before the bridge to Ocean City, Deauville Inn overlooks the bay and surrounding marshlands. The lifesaving station and a boathouse are both located on Bayview Avenue between the bay and the main street. Partially because of problems with the water supply have checked development, Strathmere still provides a good example of what Long Beach Island and the neighboring barrier islands might have looked like in the 1930s and 1940s.

Prepared by: Camille Gatza
HABS Historian
Summer 1991

- Sources:** Beitel, Herbert M. and Enck, Vance C. Cape May County: A Pictorial History. Norfolk: The Donning Company, 1988.
- Carmona, Katherine C. "Tales and Legends of Upper Township and Its Villages." South Jersey Magazine 18 (Spring 1989): 9-16.
- Sebold, Kimberly, and Sara Amy Leach. Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior.

¹ Katherine C. Carmona, "Tales and Legends of Upper Township and Its Villages," South Jersey Magazine 18 (Spring 1989), 14.

² Carmona, "Tales and Legends of Upper Township," 13-16.

Project Information:

This project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of HABS historian Sara Amy Leach, project supervisor. Three historians completed the research during summer 1991: Field supervisor Sarah Allaback (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Alfred Holden (University of Vermont), and Camille Gatz (North Carolina). David Ames (University of Delaware) made the large-format photographs. Historian, Elizabeth Harris May (George Washington University), edited the HABS reports.